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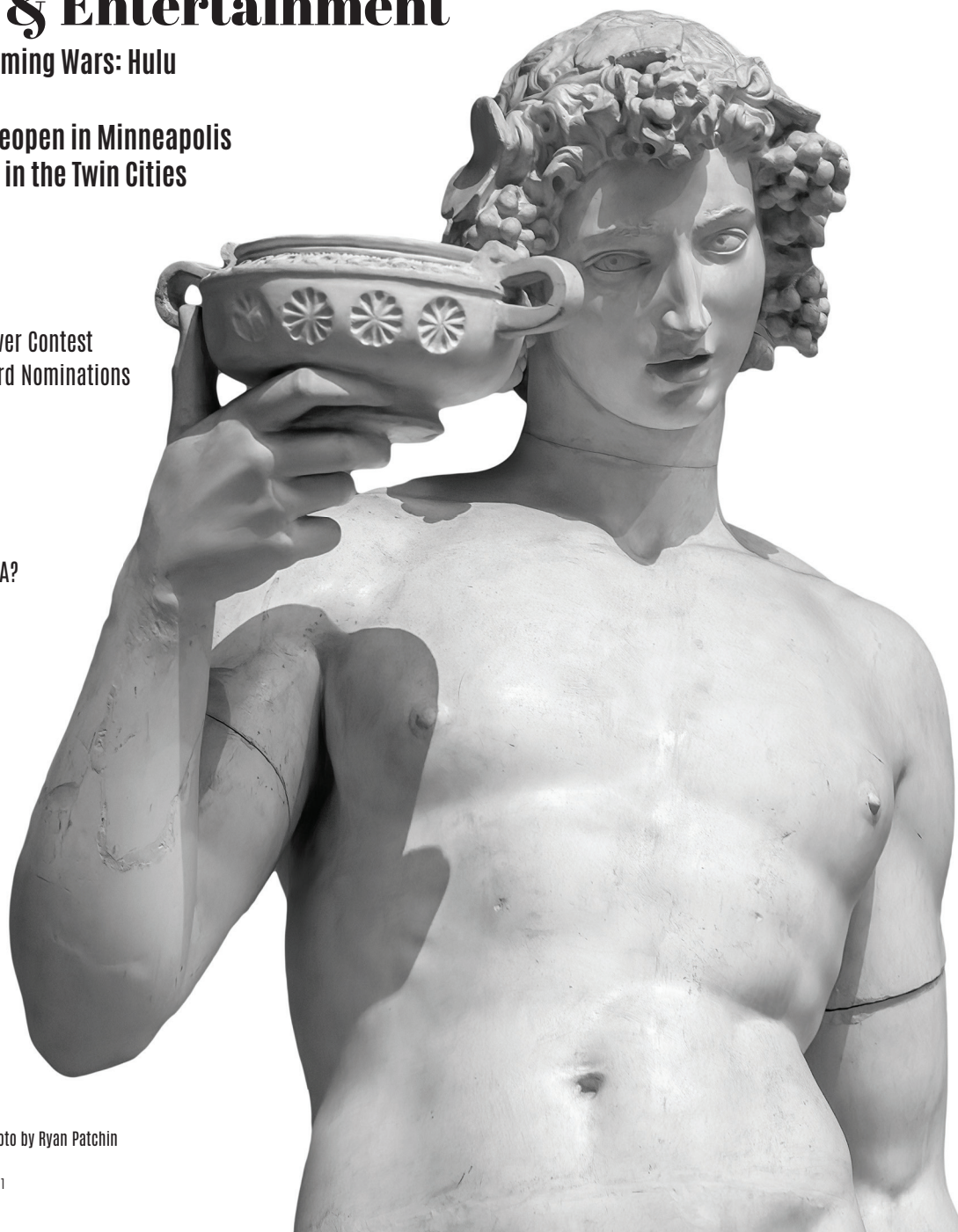

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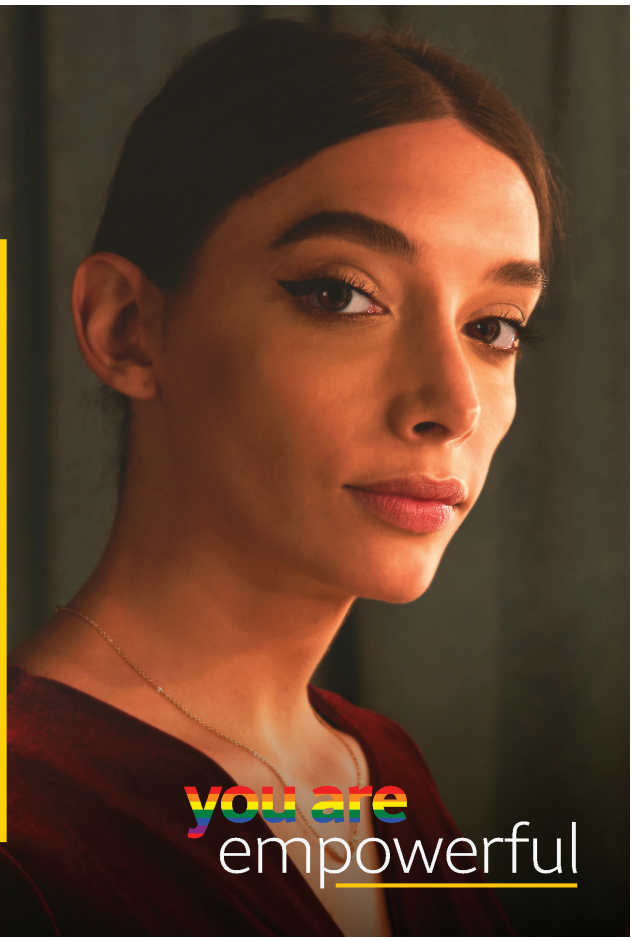

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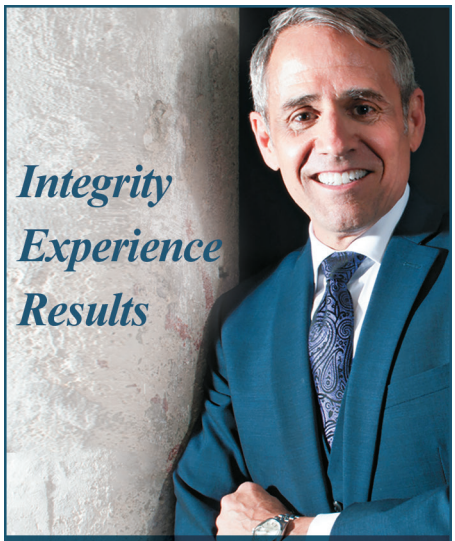

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FROM THE EDITOR | BY RYAN PATCHIN

French-Fried Finances

I was 14 years old when I had my first job interview. Eighth grade was wrapping up and I was looking for a way to secure a steady stream of stimulation for the summer. The interview was in the next town over; my dad gave me a ride.

My goal for the summer was to be hired by Valleyfair, the "family amusement park." My age limited my options: food or games. I went the food route because I knew I didn't have the charisma of games guy. *Food* was a lifestyle I could live up to.

I got the job. It came with two dark green, polo-style shirts and navy blue shorts with a matching belt. The laundry desk would have a washed, slightly oversized uniform ready for me each day. My bright red name tag notified other workers that I was under 16—and probably required as much supervision as I offered. Fryar Tucks had themselves a new cashier.

And I had my summer. I worked six hour shifts, five days per week—that's what the state allowed for workers under 16 years old at the time. I earned $6.60/hour, plus $1/hour bonus to be paid out at the end of the summer. *If* you made it to the end of the summer. I ran the register, I served the tasty French fries—I made friends and I chased crushes.

It was an immersive experience. I felt like I was part of something and I always left exhausted and smelly. I had this pseudo-summer-family unit that I genuinely didn't want to let down. Valleyfair would spend the off-season recruiting summer workers from countries in Eastern Europe and South America, so there was often a language barrier in our tiny, sweaty food shack. Didn't matter; we were fry family.

The summer was marked in milestones: the incrementally-released friend's passes, late-night employee events in the park, and the end of summer bonus—which I received. The late nights and sticky hands added up to an unforgettable experience that I couldn't wait to repeat the next summer.

In January of 2001, I received a letter from Valleyfair. It was sent to my mom's house and it was in a different, larger envelope than those that contained my paychecks. I was hoping for a *larger* paycheck, but what I got was my very first W-2. My first lesson in filing taxes came shortly after, courtesy of my stepdad. And what came next was truly magical: seemingly free money, in the form of a refund, delivered to my home's mailbox. I was mid-winter wealthy.

That $180 windfall planted a seed in me. Even though it seemed like I was alone during those late nights of scrubbing and mopping and washing—I wasn't. Someone was keeping track of each hour; they were tracking every dollar earned. And they seemed grateful for my efforts.

I started feeling like every hour worked was an hour toward the greater good. Taxes were funds that were never going to find their way to my pocket, I learned that early on. With that expectation in place, I was sort of proud to see how much had accumulated. I had skin in the game; now I could complain about potholes and the national debt.

I'm positive I'd be depressed by how quickly my annual contribution is blown through. A year's effort is maybe worth a city block of ice-melt. Or new turnout gear for a single firefighter. It counts though, and it adds up. All the blocks get plowed and the fire department has adequate gear. We did that. Collectively.

I may have looked like a lanky dingbat flailing about a pint-sized fry shack, but I was a piece of the puzzle. I was a cog in the machine. ∎

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A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Ratiocination or Lizard Hind-Brain: What's Your Pleasure?

In 1374, along the Rhine valley, hundreds of townsfolk danced compulsively–non-stop, for days–to exhaustion, even death. The mania spread to north-eastern France and the Netherlands, persisted for several months, subsided, then burst out again in 1518.

In 1491, several nuns in the Spanish Netherlands became possessed, meowing and climbing trees like cats. The mania spread from Rome to Paris, with similar distressing behaviors.

The years 1692-93 saw our own Salem witch trials. Two young girls manifested bizarre physical symptoms, were soon joined by other afflicted women; they accused more than 200 others (out of a population of 550). Thirty were found guilty, nineteen hanged.

All accounts show manias to be all-consuming, open neither to discourse nor humor. Succumb. We look now to be crafting our own 21st century conspiracy/delusion manias for future history books. Through the widest, fastest information dissemination the world has ever known, specious allegations daily sow seeds of plots and schemes from cryptic cabals. Accusations that allow for no discussion or rebuttal, and contradictory "facts" which believers have no problem accepting, i.e., "Bin Laden was dead before Seal Team 6 got to him," and, "Bin Laden is still alive."

When I was little, I believed Walt Disney himself created everything I saw in my *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* comics. Later, much as I loved Stuart Little or Kenneth Grahame's riverine denizens messing about in boats, I knew they weren't "real," like our dogs, Susie and Cherie.

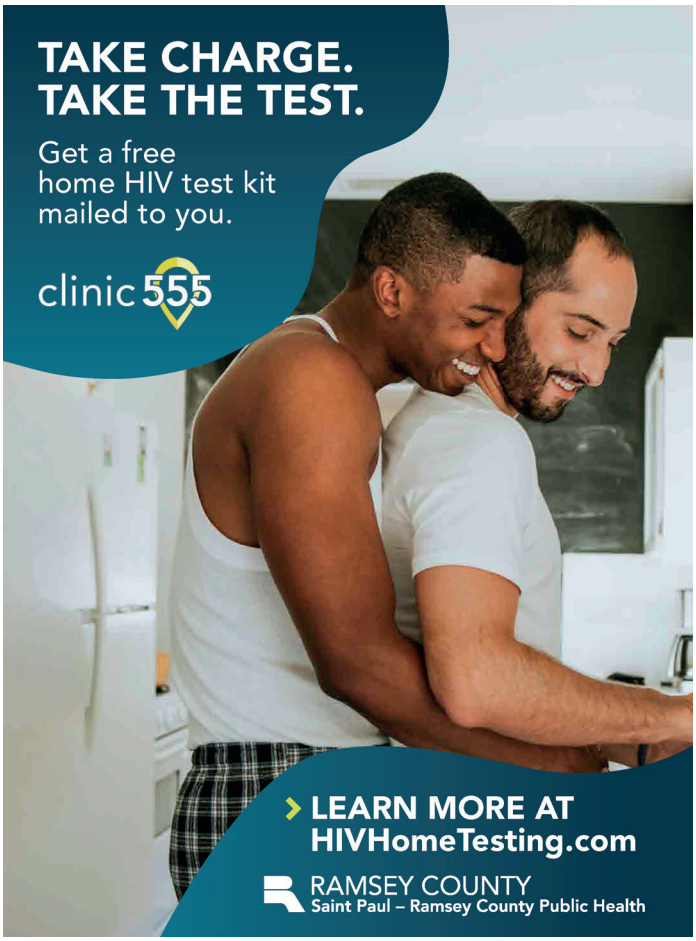
When my seventh-grade teacher read to us from Will Cuppy's *The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody*, a lightbulb went on: I had discovered satire. At the library, I found a trove of this humor, including Sellar and Yeatman's *1066 and All That*, and Thorne Smith's delightfully racy (for a thirteen-year-old) *The Nightlife of the Gods.*

In *MAD*, my suspicions of adult behavior were confirmed, while in *The Martian Chronicles* I absorbed Bradbury's space parables–not reality, but a way to read human behavior. In college, I discovered Roman playwright Plautus's satirical comedies, written two hundred years BC, that were still treading the boards through Broadway's transmogrative *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and *The Boys from Syracuse.*

As a kid I knew human mothers didn't birth mouse babies, and I knew that moles, rats, badgers, and toads didn't gather for tea, but a 2013 Atlantic piece questionnaire shows that a good 12 million Americans believe lizard people control politics. Stunningly, in 2021, we've added, "Jews in space lasers start forest fires."

There's no single answer to the "Why?" or "How?" of these beliefs. Mental aberrations? Actual belief in "Lizard Men" or the cold intent to instill fear and enmesh neophytes? Seeking stability in a changing, frightening world, or calculating a cover for venting their rage on the perceived enemy?

Whatever the impetus, chaos, rampage, and random killing isn't the answer. Stealing a lectern; posturing, feet gouging another's desk, have no aim, mere yieldings to emotion without any effort toward reasoned solutions to the country's problems. The woman who rioted, was arrested, then obtained the judge's permission to go her pre-January 6 planned vacation; the judge who smiled and sent her off to Mexico? They both illustrate glaring faults that must be addressed. ∎



COMMUNITY | BY RYAN PATCHIN

Lavender's 2021 Pride Edition Cover Contest

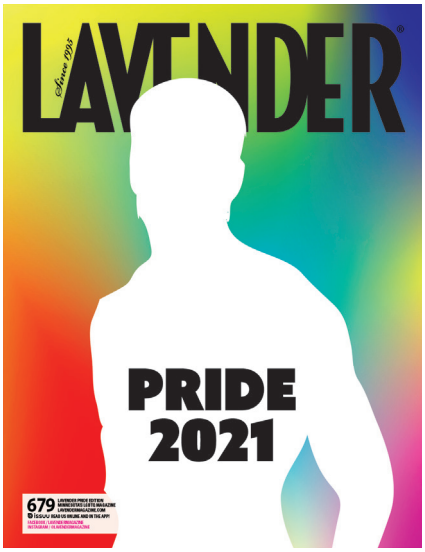
Do you know the face of Pride?

An acquaintance? A relative? Maybe it's you…If you or someone you know deserves to be the face of Pride in the Twin Cities, and grace the cover of *Lavender's* Pride issue, we want to know!

Tell us why your candidate qualifies to be featured in *Lavender*. How has this person gone above and beyond to serve others? What innovations has this individual brought to light? Whatever the reason, *Lavender* is committed to the search; all submissions will be considered.

Voting opens April 8 and runs through April 22. *Lavender* will announce the winner on April 23, 2021. Visit www.lavendermagazine.com/pridecover to submit an entry.

The contest winner will appear as the cover model for *Lavender's* 2021 Pride Edition. The 2021 Pride Edition will also include a feature article highlighting the contest winner. The winner will receive $500 worth of gift cards to community restaurants and retail businesses. ▮



Lavender's 2021 Community Awards

Do you know an individual, an organization, or a company that has done great work for the LGBTQ+ community in the past year? Maybe it's a neighbor that you've noticed has done some community organizing. Perhaps you work for a company that has some excellent equality policies. Whatever the case, we want to hear about it!

The past year has been especially tough, leaving a lot of people with newfound insecurities, or seemingly insurmountable hurdles. If someone in your life has made an impactful difference for you or others, here's a chance to thank them—we'd love to shout them out!

You can submit a nominee in the following four categories: LGBTQ+ (Individual), Ally, Organization, Small Business, or Corporation.

Lavender will accept nominations until April 9. Honorees will be featured in *Lavender's* June 17, 2021 issue. To nominate a person or organization, head to www.lavendermagazine.com/communityawards. ▮

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- Article about cover model featured in Lavender's 22nd Annual Pride Edition
- $500 worth of gift cards to community restaurants and retail businesses

Visit LavenderMagazine.com/pridecover to nominate someone.

STREAMING WARS: HULU

When we think of streaming, many of us first think of the OG content creator being Netflix. People think of Netflix when they think of *new* shows, especially because they were one of the first to start creating these original content shows. They've even won numerous, prestigious awards including Golden Globes, Emmys, and Academy Awards. However don't count the others out just yet. Hulu has entered the ring as a challenger to Netflix.

PEN15

I'm purposely putting this one on the top because if you only watch one show from this list, it has to be *PEN15*. Starring Maya Erkine and Anna Konkle, who also created the series, *PEN15* transports us back to the embarrassing times of Middle School. The duo play versions of themselves as 13-year-old misfits in the year 2000. Everything from the awkward fashion trends to horrifying moments of gym class, it's all there to be relieved over and over again.

While it's incredibly funny, what I love about

Continued on page 14

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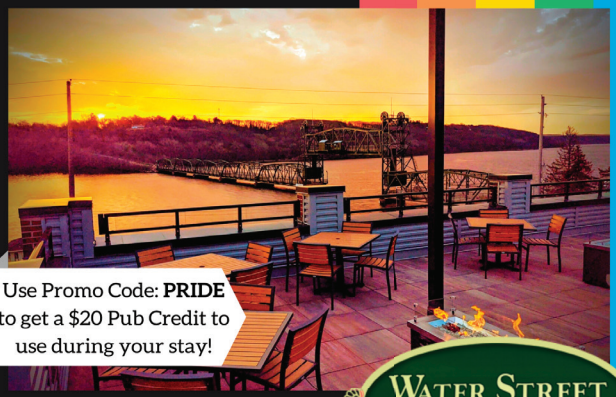

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Elisabeth Moss arrives for the The Handmaid's Tale FYC Phase 2 Event. Photo courtesy of BigStock/DFree

this show is that it's "middle school as it really happened." It's not like *Riverdale*, where they are supposed to be 16 years old but have an insane six-pack. Minus Erkine and Konkle, all the other characters are actually 13-year-old actors, which makes it even more realistic and hilarious.

THE HANDMAID'S TALE

Arguably the drama and original content series that put Hulu on the map is *The Handmaid's Tale.* Based on the 1985 novel of the same name by Margaret Atwood, this dystopian tragedy takes place in the future where fertility rates have collapsed. A new, totalitarian government has taken over the United States after a civil war. Some women specifically aren't allowed to own land, handle their own money or even read. However the worst of it is that fertile women are held as "Handmaids" where they are forced to bear children for the elite leader's wives.

NOTE: This show can be triggering for sexual assault survivors—please watch with caution. There are some heavy themes that happen

in this show and really is not for the faint of heart. It's dark but the performances by Elisabeth Moss and Ann Dowd should be studied in masterclasses.

MRS. AMERICA

Released during this past election year, this American historical drama is based on true events. Technically it was produced by FX but premiered on both FX and Hulu. It details the political movement to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in the 70s along with the unexpected backlash it received from conservative activist Phyllis Schlafy. While the story is important, the line up of actresses they have in this show is just unreal. Cate Blanchett as Schlafy, Rose Byrne as Gloria Steinem, Uzo Aduba as Shirley Chisholm and Margo Martindale as Bella Abzug make this show. Other notable performances include Elizabeth Banks and Sarah Paulson.

SHRILL

I always get nervous when my favorite people on SNL start branching out. While I'm happy for them, it's no surprise that many people leave SNL and then fail and ultimately fade away; however, that is certainly not the case with Aidy Bryant. Bryant is still on SNL and also slaying in *Shrill*, a comedy based on a book by Lindy West. The show follows Annie who is trying to make it as a journalist, however consistently bad boyfriends, a perfectionist of a boss, sick parents—and the world in general deem her not good enough and blame it on her weight.

Bryant's performance is truly incredible. It's confident, it's funny, and it's powerful. The writing is great because it shows that your weight does not define you and no one is allowed to tell you otherwise.

CASTLE ROCK

Penned as a psychological horror anthology series, *Castle Rock* features characters, settings and plots based on Stephen King's stories and his fictional town of Castle Rock in Maine. There are only two seasons, it was cancelled in Nov. 2020. Any Stephen King fan will find delight in this series. While I'm not super familiar with a lot of King's work, I am familiar with *Misery*, which is the inspiration for season two. The second season is all about Annie Wilkes and serves sort of as an origin story — loosely.

Other notable shows that Hulu has produced include *The Act, Little Fires Everywhere, Difficult People* (highly recommend), *The Great,* and *Love, Victor.* ▮

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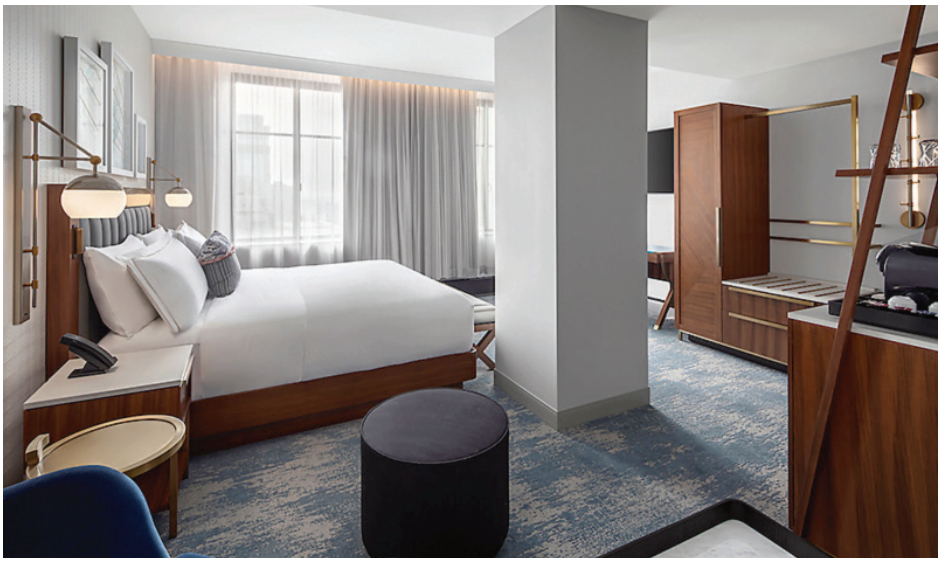
TRAVEL | BY CARLA WALDEMAR

IN-TOWN ESCAPE



As a travel writer, I've done some pretty daring (and mostly stupid) things to enliven a story, but—how's this for bravery during a crisis? I slept in a local hotel and ate. In. Its. Restaurant.

Sadly for bragging rights but happily for self-preservation, it turned out to be as safe from COVID as I've been since March, because the Rand Tower Hotel at 6th & Marquette is brand-new and thus still a bit under the radar, so no crowds. More important, it also boasts mobile check-ins and a special air-quality system, meaning that the air I inhaled there was far cleaner than that on the street (or my own apartment, for that matter).

The Rand Tower represents a classy makeover of the 1929 Art Deco building which local aviator and World War I pilot Rufus Rand Jr. erected, incorporating graceful period touches, from statues and curving staircases to terrazzo floors incised with moon-and-stars silhouettes in keeping with his fly-the-skies theme.

Guest rooms' expansive windows frame downtown's cityscape, while tones of gentle gray lend a calming vibe (unless you take advantage of the in-room espresso machine to banish sloth). There's a well-stocked gym and a fifth floor rooftop patio for wining and dining when (if?) spring arrives.

I ambled down to the lobby's lounge area of huge windows framing the passing parade, backed by soft jazz, and more tones of gray for dinner in the hotel's signature restaurant, Whiskey & Soda—to eat my first meal in a long, long while which did not originate at Whole Foods or a delivery box.

Lounging on the banquette's oversize pillows, I eavesdropped on Adam and Steve's mini-honeymoon chatter from a neighboring (but socially-distant) table while perusing the list of—of course—whiskeys. I'm a Bourbon fan, so I went straight for one of my faves, Basil Hayden; then, as the evening progressed, a glass of another love, Buffalo Trace. If someone else is buying, do try the Papp Van Winkle 12 year ($27). I'm not so crazy about the slim choices of Irish, but the Scotch line-up fares better.

Meanwhile, Adam and Steve were enjoying their martinis.

The restaurant's all-day menu is—wisely for now, anyway—a compact one. A generous and well-appointed board of cheeses and cured meats could make a meal, or vote for a classic shrimp cocktail or hardly-classic but yummy banh mi sandwich. From the salad list, I opted for the chevre number ($18), a modest toss of frisee with bits of crunchy sunchokes aside fanned pear slices in a Calvados dressing.

Entrees ($22-35) leadoff with short ribs, followed by sea bass, roast chicken and a risotto honoring winter's root veggies. The sea bass proved perfect—its ivory flesh moist and sweet, accompanied by asparagus upon a bed of celery root puree, all livened by a light whiskey cream sauce.

A quartet of desserts ($8-10) showcases fruit-filled crepes, seasonal berries and a bedtime-y milk and cookies combo. My choice—a generic brownie sundae—was perfectly pleasant.

Dine in your room if you prefer—especially for breakfast. I indulged in a decadently rich Benedict, lush with smoked salmon and eggs robed in tomato hollandaise ($21). Or choose that salmon atop a bagel ($18); omelets; or that beguiling banh mi sandwich—and more.

To plan a staycation of your own, visit www.RandTowerHotel.com or 612-688-4500 and get ready to relax. ▮

TWIN CITIES ARTS SCENE

Early Spring 2021

The arts are having a tough time of it in the pandemic, but there are still plenty of fun things to do in the Twin Cities and online. Whether you're looking for a socially distanced in-person experience or something that you can engage with from the safety of your own home, *Lavender* has you covered for Arts and Culture to-dos for the next couple of months!

BY HOLLY PETERSON

Dan Savage's HUMP! Film Festival

Now – March 6

Now in its 15th year, Dan Savage's HUMP! Film Festival, which is full of amateur X-rated content, is an online streaming event this year. Every film is less than five minutes long and content ranges from the funny to the sexy to the kinky and more. HUMP! prides itself on its diversity; celebrating bodies of every shape, color, size, orientation, and gender. Expect the unexpected in the fun line up of short films curated by Dan Savage.

More information can be found at humpfilmfest.com

Zealous Hellions (Mixed Blood Theatre)

February, 18, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Mixed Blood Theatre hosts Oregon Shakespeare Festival Artistic Director Nataki Garrett in its newest virtual ZEALOUS HELLIONS event. Garrett will discuss the state of the American theater, race and the American theater, the future of the American theater, and the damages of systemic racism and white supremacy. Zealous Hellions is a recurring monthly project of Mixed Blood Theatre to provide the community with real-time conversations between artists, cultural provocateurs, politicians and thought-leaders in an intimate setting.

More information can be found at mixedblood.com

Mixtape IV: Now Streaming (The Cowles Center)

Feb. 26 and 27 at 7:30 PM

For the fourth year running, THE MIXTAPE Collective has created a vibrant celebration of Street dance and music in the Twin Cities. THE MIXTAPE Collective brings together artists of all kinds: dancers, composers, videographers, choreographers and more. This online event is a must for anyone ready to celebrate the music and dance that makes the Twin Cities so unique.

More information can be found at www.thecowlescenter.org

Art is a Verb (MN Opera)

February 27, 2021 at 6:30 PM

The MN Opera is hosting a virtual benefit celebrating art's ability to change the world. This highly personal piece explores how each performer was drawn to opera, responds to the murder of George Floyd, and imagines what the future of opera might look like. Crafted out of conversations between vocalists, this one of a kind event promises to be as powerful as it is pertinent.

More information can be found at mnopera.givesmart.com

Continued on page 20

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Mixed-Media Collages & Combine Sculptures (Franconia Sculpture Park)

Feb. 27 at 1:00 PM

Led by Preston Drum, this class invites students to bring their own materials to this class in order to create an experimental multi-media sculpture that they can take home. All participants must wear masks and socially-distance for the duration of the class. Franconia Commons has excellent ventilation and will uphold the strictest health standards for the safety of our artists and students.

More information and other class offerings can be found at franconia.org

Chad Daniels (ACME Comedy Co.)

March 4-6, 2021, various times

Chad Daniels is a Minnesotan through and through. Born in Fergus Falls, he has found success as a standup comic, releasing five albums and appearing on several late-night television shows. Fair warning, ACME is not allowing ticket sales at the door during the pandemic to ensure that every show complies with the 25% capacity rule and masks are required while moving about the venue.

More information can be found at acmecomedycompany.com

HYBRID (The Cowles Center)

Streaming March 5-7, 2021

Whether you choose to catch the live stream at 7:30 PM on opening night or watch the recording later, you are sure to be swept up in this stunning performance. Local dance companies Hatch Dance and STRONGmovement join each other on stage for a performance that fuses the choreography of two distinct dance companies. Those who attend the opening night live stream are also able to participate in a live Q&A with the artists afterwards.

More information can be found at thecowlescenter.org

Sing it Forward: Ruby Jubilee (Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus)

March 6, 2021 at 7:00 PM

The Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus is bringing their 40th anniversary celebration online this year. You won't want to miss out on this Wizard of Oz themed fundraiser, billed as being "more fun than a pack of flying monkeys". With a program packed with singing, storytelling, and a silent auction, the Ruby Jubilee is sure to deliver on that promise.

More information can be found at tcgmc.org/

Script Club (Mixed Blood Theatre)

March 10, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Join a group of theater lovers as they connect over theatrical works in a new way. Rather than watching a live performance, instead take the opportunity to delve deeply into a piece of theater by discussing the script, led by a facilitator. Next up is the Pulitzer Prize winning play *Cost of Living* by Martyna Majok. Regan Linton will lead the discussion of the play, which centers around the relationship of a truck driver and his paralyzed ex-wife and a young man with cerebral palsy and his caregiver.

More information can be found by emailing catherine@mixedblood.com

Chanhassen Dinner Theater Concert Series

Various Dates

The Chanhassen Dinner Theater is currently open for live performances in a limited capacity. The theater is following the January 6 guidelines, which means that social distancing and COVID precautions are being followed carefully. Chanhassen Dinner Theater is offering some concerts virtually as well, so you can enjoy many of these performances from the comfort and safety of your own home. There are several upcoming concerts to choose from. Some of our favorites include:

Feb. 28 "A Night of Wonder" The Music of Stevie Wonder

March 5-6 "Wild Angels" The Women of Rock, Pop & Country (featuring music from Stevie Nicks, Adele, The Chicks, Shania Twain, and more)

March 7 "From the King, For the King" The Gospel According to Elvis

March 10-11 "3 Stars Born" (featuring songs from all three *A Star is Born* films)

More information can be found at www.chanhassendt.com/concertseries

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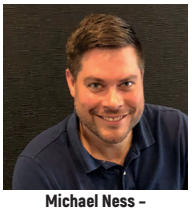
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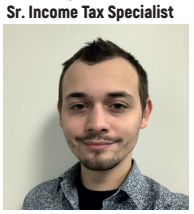
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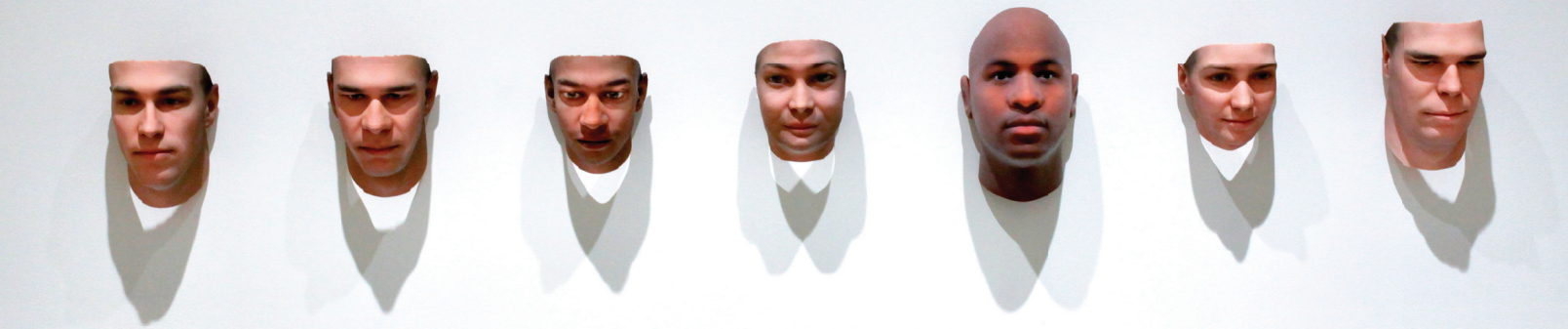
ART IN THE CITY: Galleries Reopen in Minneapolis

Minneapolis is home to several world-class art galleries. For months, the exhibitions have stood static—peripheral victims to a virus they cannot contract. Galleries throughout the city have started to reopen for guests and tours. Here's our shortlist of what's open and what's showing.

BY RYAN PATCHIN



Walker Art Center

725 Vineland Pl., Minneapolis
Mon-Wed – Closed
Thurs – 11am–9pm
Fri-Sat – 11am-6pm
Sun – 11am-5pm
walkerart.org

I paid a visit to the Walker in mid-February, my first gallery visit in nearly a year. The gallery's familiar interior and warm lighting brought me right back—like an old friend, we picked up where we left off.

The Walker is showing a diverse selection of exhibits presently. The gallery is ready to impress; there's something for everyone as you wind your way up and across the museum. Futuristic art juxtaposed with antique relics of the old world, pop art, experimental film—and all of the colours.

HIGHILGHTS:

Designs for Different Futures

A major exhibition organized by the Walker Art Center, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago—the exhibit highlights the role of designers in shaping how we think about possible futures.

"The exhibition is divided into 11 thematic sections—Labors, Cities, Intimacies, Bodies, Powers, Earths, Foods, Materials, Generations, Informations, and Resources—and features an international array of designers from all fields. Among the many forward-looking projects on view, visitors will encounter lab-grown food, textiles made of seaweed, a typeface that thwarts algorithmic surveillance, a series of books that will only be available 100 years from now, an affordable gene-editing toolbox, a shoe grown from sweat, a couture dress made with a 3D printer, and a system that learns from our sewers," according to the Walker.

Five Ways in:
Themes from the Collection

"With more than 100 works—painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, and video installations—the exhibition Five Ways In: Themes from the Collection invites us to become reacquainted with favorites from the collection and discover new pieces by artists who are reinventing genres we thought we knew."

Minneapolis Institute of Art

2400 3rd Ave. S. Minneapolis
Mon-Wed – Closed
Thurs-Sun – 10am-5pm
visit@artsmia.org

MIA recently reopened and implemented "firm new protocols to keep visitors, staff, and the collection safe." As always, general admission is free, but you'll need to make advanced reservations to visit.

MUST SEE:
In the Presence of Our Ancestors: Southern Perspectives in African American Art

"In the Presence of Our Ancestors: Southern Perspectives in African American Art" brings together methods of visual storytelling and ancestral memory through the individual practices of artists from the "Black Belt" region of the American South—a term that refers to the region's black soil, as well as the legacies of African Americans who shaped its social and agrarian culture. Spanning from Louisiana to Florida, and the mid-20th century to the present, the artists highlighted in this exhibition document rural life and traditions of metalwork, funerary and yard art, and quilt making. Here, we witness an evolution of regional artistic practice, as raw materials and found objects related to time, place, and accessibility take center stage", according to the gallery's website.

Intimate Space: A Noblewoman's Bedroom in Late Imperial China

"In the male-dominated society of imperial China, most women were physically restricted to domestic spaces. The center of a woman's life was the bedroom, where she would sit alone or with others, working or pursuing leisurely activities. The furniture and artwork featured in this exhibition, all drawn from MIA's outstanding collection of Chinese art, would have been found in a typical imperial Chinese woman's bedroom. These objects reflected a woman's educated and well-read social status, while also indicating her subordinate position as a woman in a man's world."

Rogue Buddha Gallery

357 13th Ave NE, Minneapolis
roguebuddha.com

This award winning contemporary art gallery anchored in the heart of the Northeast Arts District was founded in 1999. Their website gives an eloquent explanation to the art that Rogue Buddha displays.

"Presenting thoughtful and memorable exhibitions in a unique and welcoming environment, the Rogue Buddha Gallery is passionate about presenting art that both challenges and inspires while broadening the discourse of what arts function is and can be in everyday life. It is our belief that art plays a vital role in daily life and that its function has the potential to transcend far beyond decoration and intellectualism."

If you're still apprehensive about visiting a gallery in-person, Rogue Buddha has put special attention into their online presence, with their online gallery "open 24 hours a day."

The Minneapolis art scene offers a rich escape from winter—and a safe, culturally explorative experience where you can lose your troubles for a couple of hours at a time. ∎

BLACK-OWNED RESTAURANTS
In The Twin Cities

BY HOLLY PETERSON

This month, *Lavender* thought it would be fun to highlight five of its all-time favorite Twin Cities Black-owned restaurants. Trust us, if there is any restaurant on this list that you have not yet been to, you are in for a treat. Strap in, because we have something for everyone, whether you are craving something healthy, something greasy, something soul-foody, something with a side of coffee, or even some Jamaican fare.

The Dripping Root

First on our list is a future favorite. The Dripping Root is set to be the coolest juice bar the Twin Cities has to offer. Conveniently located on Minnehaha Avenue in the Howe neighborhood, this cute, healthy spot is currently planning to open in May. The menu will include cold pressed juice, chia seed pudding, kombucha on tap – and some of the most beautiful smoothie bowls I have ever seen.

Pierson says that in creating The Dripping Root she is hoping to "break the lines between health, wellness & culture. To create a place of togetherness, of non-judgment, of creativity, of wellness, [and] of happiness." She is well on her way to achieving that goal. Make sure you follow The Dripping Root on Facebook or Instagram for the official opening date!

Margherita Pizza from Tommie's.
Photo by Holly Peterson

Tommie's Pizza

Tommie's Pizza is a hidden St. Paul gem. Located on Selby Ave in the Union Park neighborhood, this is the NY style pizza place you have been wishing you could find in the Twin Cities. The plain cheese pizza is perfect, the Buffalo Chicken is the only chicken pizza I have ever personally enjoyed, and The Very Veggie is everything you want in a veggie pizza. There is even a pizza (The Selby) that successfully incorporates sauerkraut into its toppings, which I think we can all agree is a feat.

Swing by for a slice or pick up a pizza with a side of wings (the Selby sauce is a must), but whatever you do, make sure that Tommie's Pizza is at the top of your list for your next pizza night.

Golden Thyme Coffee and Cafe

Another St. Paul favorite is Golden Thyme Coffee and Cafe. This little treasure, also located on Selby Ave, is in the Summit Hill neighborhood. This joint's robust breakfast menu and tasty coffees has made Golden Thyme one of my go-to coffee shops for close to a decade. Enjoy the never-ending jazz playlist over breakfast staples like grits, omelets, and loaded hash browns. Sip on an espresso drink given a nom de plume in honor of iconic jazz musicians like Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman, Cab Calloway, and Duke Ellington. Golden Thyme changed locations just before COVID hit. If you haven't seen it yet, you are sure to love the new decor; from the drum chandelier to the ceramics display, it's a trendy, cozy spot.

Golden Thyme is one of St. Paul's finest – we are confident that you will love it as much as we do.

Golden Thyme's Dirty Grits. Photo by Holly Peterson

Continued on page 26

Wendy's House of SOUL

Wendy's House of SOUL has some of the best soul food in the Twin Cities. She slays all the classics: greens, mac and cheese, yams, corn bread, chicken and waffles. Every single soul food standard is cooked, baked, and boiled to perfection. However, if you've never been to Wendy's House of SOUL before, you have to start with the SoulRoll, which is exactly what it sounds like: an eggroll filled with soul food.

Every SoulRoll has a perfect, crunchy exterior wrapped around one innovative flavor combination after another. There are fifteen SoulRolls to choose from, ranging from the Jive Turkey to the Marrmemac (there are three different kinds of mac and cheese scooped into that beauty) to the Nanny (greens, fried chicken, and mac and cheese). And if fifteen choices isn't enough for you, you can even build your own.

Wendy's House of SOUL has a lighter menu if that is more your style (the Lemon Pepper Chicken salad is a favorite of mine), but at this stage of winter, aren't we all trying to carb up for warmth? Next time you find yourself in Near North, treat yourself to something deep fried at Wendy's House of SOUL. You will be glad you did.

Wendy's House of SOUL. Pictured are the Nanny and Pepper Me Bad SoulRolls, the SOULcumber Salad, a Peach Cobbler Pocket, Mac and Cheese, and SOULtots. Photo by Holly Peterson

Pimento Jamaican Kitchen. Pimento's One Love Special - a combination of fire-grilled jerk chicken, slow-roasted jerk pork or curry veggies. Add a meat-filled patty and explore Pimento's thorough list of bottled sodas. Photo by Holly Peterson

Pimento Jamaican Kitchen

Pimento Jamaican Kitchen offers the best casual, Jamaican dining you will find in the Twin Cities. Located on Nicollet Avenue in the Whittier neighborhood, this restaurant features one knock out menu item after another. From creamy Curry Veggies to the One Love Special (a combo platter of jerk chicken and pork on a bed of rice and beans), everything on this menu is sure to delight. I am personally a huge sucker for the spicy, meat-filled patties and always kick myself for not ordering an extra side of plantains, which Pimento Jamaican Kitchen slathers in a mouth-watering vanilla glaze.

Pimento Jamaican Kitchen also has a fun selection of Jamaican sodas that are well worth ordering. My most recent soda was a pineapple ginger blend that was sweet and tangy and complemented my lunch perfectly. Next time the Minnesota cold starts to feel like it's a little too much, bring a little sunshine into your life with a hearty meal from Pimento Jamaican Kitchen.

So that's our list! Obviously we've barely scratched the surface of quality Black-owned restaurants here. Which of your favorites did we miss? Have you tried everything that made our list? ∎

Nominations are now open for

LAVENDER'S 2021 COMMUNITY PRIDE AWARDS

Do you know an individual, organization, or company that has done great work on behalf of the LGBTQ community?

Let Lavender recognize their efforts by nominating them in one of these categories for a Lavender Community Pride Award:

Nominations are **OPEN** through **April 9, 2021**

- **LGBTQ**
- **Ally**
- **Organization**
- **Small Business**
- **Corporation**

Honorees will be profiled in Lavender's June 17, 2021 issue

Submit nominations at

LavenderMagazine.com/communityawards

SENIOR LIVING | BY KASSIDY TARALA

What's The Big IDEA?

A University of Washington study offers the first federally funded research study examining ways to improve the health and quality of life for LGBTQ+ seniors with memory loss.

Aging with Pride: IDEA (Innovations in Dementia Empowerment and Action), a study by the University of Washington, is taking a new approach to older adults and their health care needs—and participants never even need to leave their homes. The research study tests a tailored approach to improve physical function and independence, addressing the unique needs of LGBTQ+ seniors who frequently experience stigma, isolation, and negative interactions with health care providers.

The study is supported by a five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute on Aging. The principal investigators are Karen Fredriksen Goldsen, PhD from the University of Washington School of Social Work, and Linda Teri, PhD from the University of Washington School of Nursing. The study is open nationwide. Amy Cunningham, MS, Research Coordinator for the study, answered some questions about why this study is so important.

"Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect up to 5.7 million Americans, yet we are only beginning to understand their impact in underserved communities," says Amy Cunningham, MS, Research Coordinator for the study. "The study documents that nearly 40 percent of LGBTQ+ older adult participants reported moderate cognitive challenges, which were associated with their experiences of marginalization and social isolation. LGBTQ+ adults with memory loss and other cognitive challenges face significant barriers to healthcare access and a lack of culturally competent care."

NHAS found that 10 percent of LGBTQ+ older adult respondents reported severe or extreme cognitive challenges. Given their lifetime experiences of victimization, discrimination, and bias, Cunningham says, many LGBTQ+ seniors forgo seeking needed medical care.

"Fifteen percent of LGBTQ older adults report fear of accessing health care outside the LGBTQ community, and 13 percent—including more than a third of transgender respondents—report having been denied health care or were provided inferior health care due to being perceived as a sexual or gender minority," Cunningham says. "Thus, many cases of memory loss, including Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, are likely undiagnosed and untreated in these communities."

Cunningham says the purpose of IDEA is to focus on problem solving, skill building, and low-impact exercise. The findings of IDEA are designed to help LGBTQ+ people living with dementia and to set the groundwork for other culturally-tailored interventions and policies designed to support LGBTQ+ people in our increasingly culturally diverse and growing older adult population, she says.

"Research studies answer important questions. The IDEA study seeks to improve the health of individuals in the LGBTQ+ community. Individuals can increase their social support and community engagement through participating in studies," Cunningham says. "This can result in less mental distress and improved quality of life for both the person with memory loss and their care partner."

A person with memory loss and their care partner participate in the study as a pair, Cunningham says. The care partner can be a spouse, partner, friend, adult child, or anyone who assists the person with memory loss. At least one of them must be LGBTQ+, and the person with memory loss must be fifty years or older. The pair do not need to live together but they must live in the United States.

Participation in the IDEA study is free, and every pair of participants is compensated $25 for each phone assessment completed, with five total assessments over a thirteen-month period. Once all assessments are done, the pair receives $125 total.

"The participant with memory loss and their care partner join an individualized nine-session coaching program. All sessions are done virtually using easy video chatting. Trained coaches teach the pair a set of behavioral strategies, including problem-solving skills, which identify consistent areas of tension while brainstorming ideas and approaches to improve behavioral challenges," Cunningham explains. "Coaches strategize with the pair to address communication challenges related to memory loss. Coaches also teach a low-impact exercise program including stretching, flexibility, balance, and endurance to strengthen the body, reduce injury, and improve mood."

For more information about Aging with Pride: IDEA, visit ageidea.org, email ageIDEA@uw.edu, or call 1-888-655-6646. ∎

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CAUSES | BY RYAN PATCHIN

MINNESOTA BLACK HISTORY, PART II

Tracing back: Modern consequences of antiquated enactments

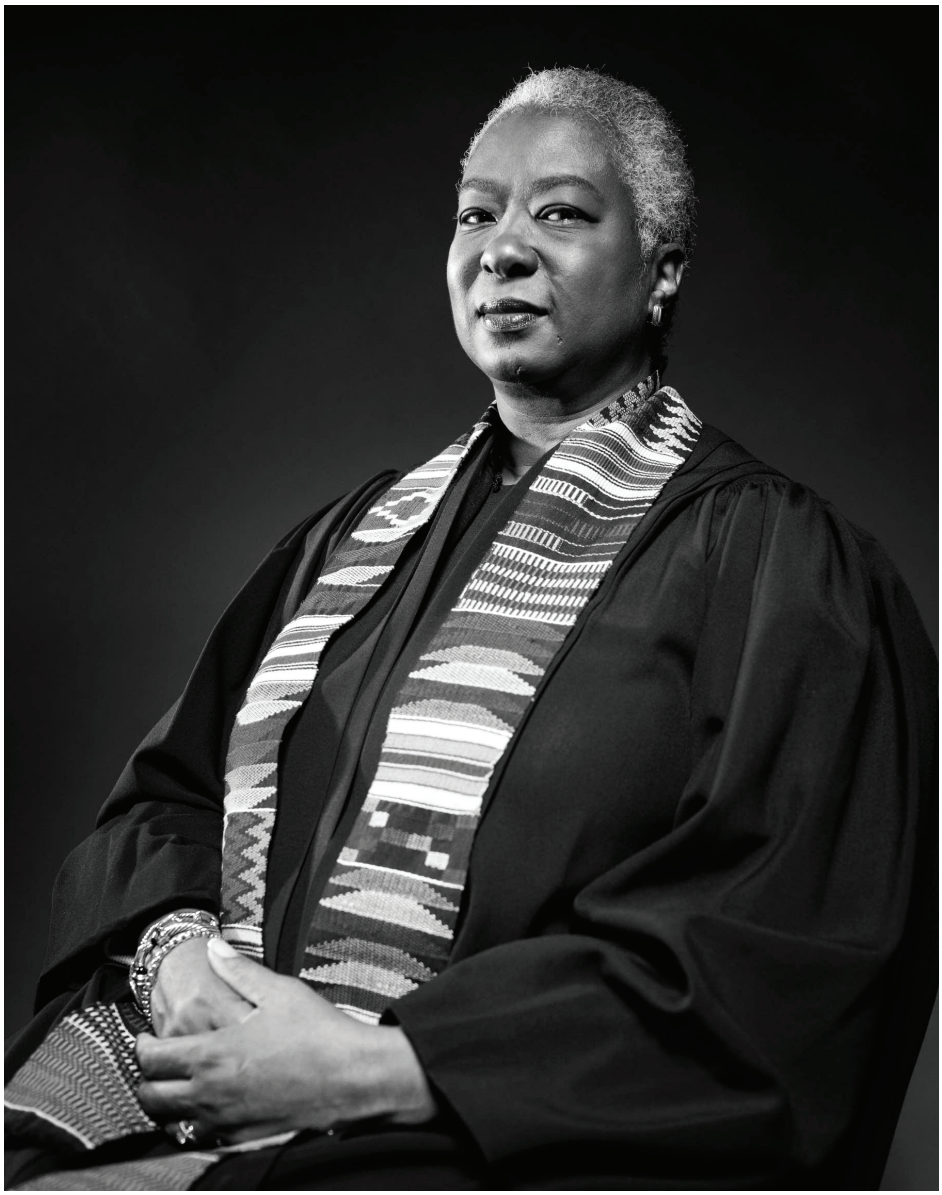
The latest Census Bureau data shows that of Minnesota's 5.6 million residents, about 400,000 or 7 percent are Black or African American. The Black population in Minnesota has been historically small. Population data from 1890 shows a total of 1,310,283 Minnesotans, with 3,683—only 0.3 percent of them identifying as Black or African American.

To give context to those numbers: Mississippi is about 39 percent Black, and Montana has the lowest black population, hovering around 1 percent. The Census data puts the national Black or African American population at 13.4 percent.

Federal Reserve data is where we uncover a darker side; there's a decided wealth gap between non-Hispanic white households and Black households in America—and Minnesota is no exception. In 2016, the median wealth of non-Hispanic white households was $171,000, while Black households brought in $17,000—ten times less. Said wealth gap had widened considerably since The Great Recession of 2007.

Homeownership numbers are staggering. The American Community Survey, using data collected between 2013-2017, showed only 24 percent of Black families owned their homes, compared to 76 percent for white families.

According to Kirsten Delegard, public historian and director of Mapping Prejudice, "Owning the land is what gives people stability in their lives, to build community and to build wealth." Mapping Prejudice has already uncovered more than 30,000 so-called racial covenants in deeds in Hennepin County. Written into housing deeds between 1910-1950, the covenants barred blacks from buying in white designated neighborhoods. The covenants have proven difficult to unwind.



Retired Judge Pamela Alexander. Photo by Evan Frost /MPR News

Continued on page 34

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America's largest Pride issue

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Community voting for finalists will be **April 8-22, 2021**

Winner will be announced on **April 23, 2021**

Winner receives:

- Cover model for Lavender's 22nd Annual Pride Edition
- Article about cover model featured in Lavender's 22nd Annual Pride Edition
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REAL ESTATE

Attorney General Keith Ellison

Andrea Jenkins, Ward 8

Alana Semuels' *Time* magazine article points to "long-term consequences of segregation, which has contributed to denying Black Americans the jobs, salaries and other opportunities that are key to upward mobility." Myron Orfield, a law professor at the Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity at the University of Minnesota says, "If you live in a segregated neighborhood, every single bad thing in the world happens to you: you don't get a loan for housing, and the schools lead to jail." Orfield has documented the re-segregation of the Twin Cities, and notes, "If you go to an integrated neighborhood, none of these things happen."

The Twin Cities deserted a plan drafted in the 1970s that required suburbs to provide a "fair share" of affordable housing, according to Orfield. between 1971 and 1979, 73 percent of all new, subsidized housing was constructed in the suburbs. Between 2002 and 2011, 92 percent of all subsidized, very low-income housing was built in central Minneapolis and St. Paul. Residents' pushback, based on social-engineering fears, moved lower-income families to Minneapolis and St. Paul—and out of the suburbs.

"Black Americans trying to build wealth through the most traditionally American means — homeownership — have long faced obstacles," according to Semuels. "The Federal Housing Administration for decades refused to guarantee mortgages in and near Black neighborhoods, forcing Black Americans into 'contract-for-deed' arrangements in which they were essentially renting, even though they were paying for improvements in their homes."

It's been a long, convoluted road for Black people in Minnesota—and America alike. It may be generations before the wealth gap is eradicated. COVID-19 and growing social-political unrest dealt dueling blows to families around the nation, creating a vacuum in residential reinforcements. Prior to the onset of recent events, there was a noticeable, undeniably positive trajectory.

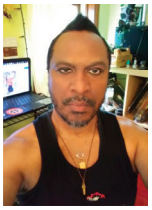
In 2018, St. Paul elected Melvin Carter, their first black mayor. The same year, Leslie Redmond became the youngest president of the Minneapolis branch of the NAACP. 2018 also saw the retirement of Hennepin County Judge Pamela Alexander, the first Black female judge in Minnesota. Judge Pamela Alexander had served since she was initially appointed to the Hennepin County Municipal Court in 1983. In 2019, Keith Ellison became the 30th Attorney General of Minnesota.

Andrea Jenkins is an openly transgender Black woman who currently sits on Minneapolis' City Council. In an interview with MPR News, Jenkins said, "My vision for the future of black Minnesotans is a vision of wealth creation, of parity in educational pursuits." She continued, "My vision for Black Minnesota is to be on par with all of Minnesota." ▮

OUR VOICES

JAMEZ SITINGS | BY JAMEZ L. SMITH

GRIEVING IS WEIRD (UPON THE DEATH OF ANNAIS MELSON)



Grieving is weird
It hits you in waves
The first wave is numbing
it can last for seconds
or days
weeks
years
forever
never know how long it'll last

It's passage is always shocking
Catches you unaware
Leaving you in tears
which is the next wave …

Tears
Uncontrollable
Inexplicable tears
I don't understand their intensity
their ferocity
My body heaves
Sighs
come out as screams

Mourning is like a flame
that starts at your feet
then reaches your heart
and let's itself out through your head.

Then it passes
leaving silence
making way for the next waves
of numbness
of tears
the waves of memories
unfolding
good times
bad times
that made up a lifetime lost

And the tears come again
this time with quiet feeling
reflection
sincere sense of loss
You tell yourself
"Life goes on".
and
life goes on.

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